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5 January 1948

Memorandum for Colonel Riley F. Ennis
Intelligence Division
Room 2B756, Pentagon Building

My dear Colonel Ennis:

Upon further reflection I would like to reiterate in writing the proposal that Mr. Bagnall and I made to you the other day in regard to the European document situation. I am not certain that I left you with a clear idea of our thought on the matter.

Since all of the documents in the European theater are under your general control, we would like to suggest the organization, with your help and blessing, of a group, representative of all the interested agencies including Allied if deemed advisable, for the purpose of meeting in Europe some time before the first of April with the power of making on-the-spot decisions relative to all the documents now being held in Europe that may be of interest to any authorized agency. It was hoped by this means to accomplish the following:

1. Elimination from consideration or shipment of all documents not desired by any represented agency.
2. The selection and allocation on the basis of paramount interest of the desirable documents.
3. The determination of the order in which the desirable documents will be returned to the United States.
4. If possible, the determination of the volume of documents to be returned to the US per month.

It was hoped by this means to eliminate unnecessary packing, handling, shipping, more handling and the final destruction in the US of a mass of unwanted material. It was also hoped that the documents currently in the greatest need could be selected for earliest shipment. Since there may be a conflict of interest between the different using agencies it was felt that the representatives on the ground should be given considerable authority and freedom of action.

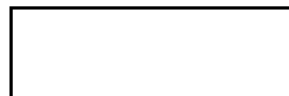
If representatives of the following were included in the group, it would appear to be generally representative: Intelligence Division, War Dept., ONI, Navy Dept., A-2 and Technical Intelligence, Air Forces, State Dept., Library of Congress, FDB, CIA, and possibly the Hoover War Library and any Army technical services interested. Since the theater commander has first call on all documents his representative should possibly be the controlling head of this board with the power of making the first and final selections when and if he so desires.

Our advocating this scheme is no reflection upon anyone as it is common knowledge that the document situation in Europe has always been in a state far from clear, inasmuch as nearly every organization was in the business of collecting documents suitable for their purposes. Organizations such as PIAT, War Crimes and Military Government were often run in connection with one or more of our allies which further complicated the document situation. Since no one in the theater can be as familiar with the document requirements over here as the local representatives are, it is felt this would be a worthwhile project. It is not the intention that this will be a large group or that any detailed examination of the documents will be made. On the contrary, a small group of experts could interview the custodians at each repository and by scanning a few selected volumes or collections make an on-the-spot decision. If any additional help on the ground is needed it could probably be borrowed from agencies already in the theater.

The Foreign Documents Branch, CIA, has no interest in acquiring the physical possession of any documents. It is only hoped to locate and determine the ownership of intelligence material in order that recommendations regarding its exploitation, if and when needed, can be most efficiently made.

The foregoing is only on the condition that the list and summary of the European document situation momentarily expected does not fully meet the demands of the situation.

Sincerely,



Chief, Foreign Documents Branch.

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